PERFINS

CATALOGUE OF OFFICIAL PERFINS

THE GREAT BRITAIN PHILATELIC SOCIETY

Price 5/-

CATALOGUE
OF
OFFICIAL PERFINS

SECTION 1. GREAT BRITAIN

Compiled by
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With the assistance of
R. BOWMAN and MEMBERS of
THE SECURITY ENDORSEMENT AND
PERFIN SOCIETY OF G.B.

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INTRODUCTION

This work is intended to be rather more than a simple catalogue and is an attempt to gather under one cover all known information on perfins used officially throughout the U.K. It is hoped that the result succeeds in being interesting and suggestions for improvement of future editions will be gladly accepted by the Society.

The basis upon which a perfin is afforded the status of an "Official" in the general philatelic world is very nebulous to say the least, and whilst some have achieved 'fame', others which merit equal standing have been ignored by most collectors. For the purposes of this work two criteria have been used in deciding what constitutes an official perfin. Firstly, there are those which have already received general recognition and are catalogued elsewhere, and secondly, those used by departments or agencies of national governments, which are departments of equal importance to those using the generally accepted official perfins.

In the preparation of the catalogue many sources were tapped for information and these are acknowledged wherever appropriate throughout the following pages. We would, however, like to particularly acknowledge the assistance given by the 1944 edition of the Stamp Collectors Annual which contained a catalogue of 'Perforated Official Stamps'. It was that book which originally triggered-off the idea for this work, and which has provided a lot of the groundwork.

RARITY RATING

To provide some idea of the scarcity of the stamps listed herein, an alphabetical key is used, when possible, to indicate comparative values.

This consists of 25 letters from Capital A to capital Y—each letter representing a unit—A being the lowest and Y the highest. Z, Z*, Z**, and Z*** indicate degrees of rarity beyond Y. Three small letters (a), (b), and (c) in brackets, represent one-quarter, one-half, and three-quarters of an "A" unit respectively.

The ratings given are based on returns made by members of the Society, and/or on catalogue or other values when they exist.

The Government Departments of Great Britain known to have used stamps perforated with their initials, or with a symbol, such as a crown and initials, are as follows:—

1.1. Admiralty Transport Department.

1.2. Board of Trade.

1.3. Crown Agents.

1.4. Department of Scientific and Industrial Research.

1.5. H.M. Office of Works.

1.6. H.M. Stationery Office.

1.7. Ministry of Munitions.

1.8. Public Trustee Office.

In general, these officially perforated stamps have received scant recognition, for they are but briefly mentioned in "Stanley Gibbons, Part One" (after the listing of the Overprinted Official stamps), and I am informed by Mr. Mackay that the British Museum Stamp Collections do not include examples of Perfins.

The work of perforating postage stamps with initials is not undertaken by the Post Office of Great Britain, therefore, the Government Departments using such stamps will presumably be responsible for the perforating, either by doing it themselves, or by having it done for them elsewhere.

It may be as well to recall that all perfins showing a crown in the design are not Officials. Some are very attractive trademarks and have been used by the following firms:—

23. Crown only—James Russell & Sons Ltd., Wednesbury.

24. Crown above S J—Spear & Jackson Ltd., Sheffield.

25. Crown below S B—Stringer Brothers, Birmingham.

26. Crown above S T—Brereton Collieries (Earl of Shrewsbury and Talbot).

27. Crown above J R & S—Joseph Rogers & Sons Ltd., Sheffield.

(The numbers refer to the "Designs" pages of the Society's "Catalogue of Identified G.B. Perfins".)

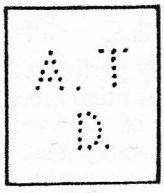
1.1 ADMIRALTY TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT

Before World War I there were two Government Departments concerned with merchant shipping—the Marine Department of the Board of Trade, and the Transport Department of the Admiralty; the latter performed a number of duties which included the sea transport arrangements required by the Government. It owned some 350 coal boats which carried fuel for the Fleet and Naval Establishments. It also had a hospital ship and some other vessels.

The Department became very important in World War I. It had the power to requisition Merchant Ships.

It is not known when the Department was formed, but it was absorbed into the Ministry of Shipping that came into being in 1916.

This Official Perfin has been reported by Mr. Rymer Young, who has examples of it from a collection formed by the late Dr. Gordon Ward. The postmark is of Liverpool, where there are some Admiralty Offices, but the A.T/D perfin may well have been used in other places.



Height $4\frac{1}{4}$ mm.
K.G.V
On the stamps of 1912-22
$\frac{1}{2}$d. green
1d. red

1.2 BOARD OF TRADE

Whitakers Almanack tells us that "The Board of Trade has general responsibility for the United Kingdom's commerce industry and overseas trade, and particularly responsibility in relation to all industries, except those which are the direct concern of other Departments".

Stamps perforated with an imperial crown over the initials B.T. were used by the Board of Trade and constitute the first of the Official stamps of Great Britain, being in use before the overprinted officials, "Inland Revenue", "Office of Works", etc.

These perforated official stamps of the Board of Trade have been expertly studied by Captain H. T. Jackson, who has written articles on the subject, including lists of the stamps known to have been so perforated; one series was published in "The Philatelic Adviser" from June to November, 1950. Another 10 years study was incorporated in the article specially written for our News Sheet, and in this Captain Jackson gave more information about forgeries. It was later published in "Stamp Collecting" in 1962, in the December 7th and 14th issues.

The following notes are extracted from the later articles.

The period of use was from about November 1880 to May 14th 1904. As inland mail from the Board of Trade would be franked, the stamps were only required for foreign mail, such as was sent to Captains of British ships in foreign ports, to the editor of "Almanac de Gotha", or to the trade departments of other governments. The only official exception was that from 1887 the stamps were sometimes used on parcels in Britain.

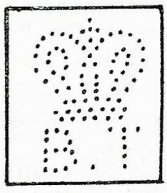
The stamps would be postmarked London E.C. or very rarely London S.W.

Two types of the genuine dies were used.

TYPE No. 1. Large holes forming an imperial crown over B.T. What has been catalogued as a variety without stop after B is due to a worn pin failing to register.

TYPE No. 2. Small holes, wider apart, showing the same design. The earliest known date for this type is 1900.

Captain Jackson exposes the many forgeries very fully in his article. It would seem most advisable to take care when making any purchase of Board of Trade perfins, and, if possible to seek the opinion of the experts.



Line Engraved			1/-	orange brown	
2d.	blue pl.15	Z***		pl.13	Z*
				pl.14	Z***
1881			1d.	lilac 16 dots	E
½d.	green deep	R	6d.	carmine on	
½d.	green pale		6d.	lilac	Z***
1d.	venetian red	R			
1½d.	venetian red		**1884**		
2d.	rose	† Y	½d.	slate blue	K
2½d.	blue pl.21		1½d.	lilac	Z
	pl.22	U	2d.	lilac	Z*
	pl.23	Z***	2½d.	lilac	Y
4d.	grey brown		3d.	green	Z*
	pl.17	† Z***	4d.	green	Z*
	pl.18	Z***	6d.	green	Z**
6d.	grey pl.17	† Z***	1/-	green	Z*

1887-92			**1900**		
½d.	vermilion	† E	½d.	blue-green	F
1½d.	purple & green	F	1/-	green & carm.	G
2d.	green & verm.	G			
2½d.	purple/blue	F	**1902 (K.E. VII)**		
3d.	purple/yellow	† E	½d.	blue green	† G
4d.	green & brown	F	1d.	scarlet	† F
4½d.	green & carm.	‡ F	2d.	green & carm.	† F
5d.	purple & blue	E	2½d.	blue	† F
6d.	purple/rose red	‡ F	3d.	purple	‡ F
9d.	purple & blue	† F	5d.	purple & blue	† F
10d.	purple & carm.	† Z***	6d.	purple	† F
1/-	green	‡ N			

NOTES

The above list has been taken from Captain Jackson's article. The symbol (‡) indicates that the stamps may also be found with Type No. 2. (3d. purple, 1902 found with Type No. 2 only.) The symbol (†) indicates stamps reported by members.

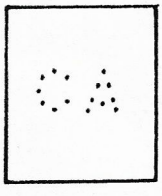
1.3 CROWN AGENTS

The Crown Agents for Overseas Governments and Administrations are the officially appointed business and financial agents of a large number of Governments and public authorities.

The Crown Agents *overprint* "C.A." is known on postage stamps of the reign of Edward VII, but the 1d. and 6d. so overprinted were for fiscal use. The 6d. on a telegram piece was recently sold by auction for £11 10s. 0d. Some examples of the 1d. are known used on letters.

The *perfin* "CA" was only discovered in 1962 when two covers were seen, illustrated in the "Great Britain Philatelist". It was heard that another 10 covers were known with stamps so perforated, each having the embossed seal of the Crown Agents on the flap of the envelope.

Only one of our members reported having an example of this perfin.



A number of other concerns have used the same initials and it is important to ensure that the Crown Agents type is not confused with these. It is, however, fairly distinctive for the A is slightly taller than the C on the copies seen so far.

The known values are:—

1912 Watermark Royal Cypher (multiple) K.G.V.
½d. green

1912-22 Watermark Royal Cypher K.G.V.
½d. green
1½d. brown
2d. orange

These must qualify for one of the Z ratings.

1.4. DEPARTMENT OF SCIENTIFIC AND INDUSTRIAL RESEARCH

This Department was established in December 1916. In a short article written in 1956*, D. Clayton said: "Postage stamps were first perforated DS/IR about June 1937. The perforating being performed by the Department itself and on all values from ½d. to 1/- except 5d. and 7d., and on high values 2/6d., 5/-, 10/- and £1."

"Until recently these perforated stamps were used on all mail in all branches of the Department except the Headquarters Office where they were used only on mail for abroad and inland parcels."

The writer expressed an opinion that DS/IR perforated stamps would be less easy to find than those of the Stationery Office, and this opinion would seem to be confirmed to some extent by the returns on the worksheets—the numbers given being rather less than those of the Stationery Office, and not all stamp values were reported.

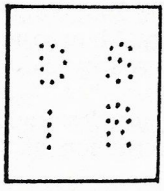
Some perforations may be found in inverted, in reversed, and in inverted/reversed positions.

The Department is known to have Offices, Laboratories or Research Stations at the following places:—

† London
† Aberdeen
Boston Spa
Cardiff
Edinburgh
† Glasgow (East Kilbride)
Langley
Newcastle-upon-Tyne
† Princes Risborough
Slough
Stevenage
Teddington
Wallingford
† Watford
West Drayton

† Denotes that postmarks on DS/IR stamps have been reported with these names. Postmarks have also been noted with Aylesbury and Richmond.

*—Stamp Collecting, 24th February 1956.



The denominations and issues listed below are compiled from returned worksheets.

1924 K.G.V.

6d.	purple	E

1936 K.E.VIII.

1½d.	brown	B

1937-48 K.G.VI.

½d.	green	A
1d.	scarlet	A
1½d.	red-brown	(c)
2d.	orange	B
2½d.	ultra.	(c)
6d.	purple	A
7d.	green	B
1/-	bistre	B

1941-42
Light Colours

½d.	green	A
1d.	scarlet	A
1½d.	red-brown	B
2d.	orange	A
2½d.	ultra.	(b)
3d.	violet	A

1950-51
Colour changes

½d.	orange	A
1d.	ultra.	A
1½d.	green	A
2d.	red-brown	A
2½d.	scarlet	(c)
4d.	ultra.	(c)

Q.E.II
Simplified

½d.	orange	(c)
1d.	ultra.	(b)
1½d.	green	(c)
2d.	red-brown	A
2½d.	carmine-red	(c)
3d.	lilac	(b)
4d.	ultra.	A
6d.	purple	(a)
8d.	magenta	B
9d.	bronze-grn.	B
1/-	brown	(a)
2/6	black-brown	A
5/-	rose red	B

Commemoratives

1937 Coronation

1½d.	maroon	B

1953 Coronation

2½d.	carmine red	A
4d.	ultra.	B

1958 Commonwealth Games

3d.	lilac	B
6d.	purple	B

1.5 HER MAJESTY'S OFFICE OF WORKS

In his book, "British Stamps", Patrick Hamilton says: "The Office of Works Official stamps with the *overprint* were issued to the Assistant Surveyors of the Office of Works at Liverpool, Birmingham, Bristol, Leeds, Southampton, Edinburgh and Glasgow, and to the sub-office at Manchester for use on local correspondence. They were also used by the Head Office in London on foreign mail."

The first of these *overprinted* stamps were issued on 24.3.96, the values being the ½d. vermilion of 1887 and the 1d. lilac of 1881 (16 dots).

Before the issue of the overprint "O.W. OFFICIAL" the ½d. vermilion and 1d. lilac were both used with perforated initials, and with Crown and initials.

Elsewhere, Mr Hamilton says that in August 1895 2400 copies of the ½d. vermilion were perforated HM/OW and 3600 copies of the 1d. likewise.

In October 1895 the die was changed to Crown over OW and a similar quantity was perforated on the same two stamp values. These two perfins, therefore, must be scarce, especially on cover.

No member returning a worksheet was able to give any information, and, as yet, it is not possible to give any details of the perforations themselves.

The Department is now known as the Ministry of Works.

	HM/OW	
1895	½d. vermilion	Z***
	1d. lilac	Z***
	CROWN OVER OW	
1895	½d. vermilion	Z***
	1d. lilac	Z***

1.6 HER (HIS) MAJESTY'S STATIONERY OFFICE

Whitaker's Almanac tells us that "H.M. Stationery Office was established in 1786 and is the British Governments central organisation for the supply of printing, binding, office supplies and office machinery of all kinds, and published books and periodicals, for the Public Service at home and abroad; it also undertakes duplicating and distributing services for government departments. The Stationery Office is the publisher for the government and has bookshops in London, Edinburgh, Cardiff, Manchester, Bristol, Birmingham and Belfast."

It has been stated that, from 1880 or 1881, the Stationery Office used stamps perforated either with a Crown over S O or between S O, and mention has been made of 5/- and 10/- stamps of 1883-84 perforated with a Crown and S O surrounded by a large perforated circle; but such a perforation would most likely be for fiscal, not postal use. In 1881 punctures consisting of a large crown with letters below were used, for example, on Bankruptcy fiscal stamps with the letters HCJ and on Judicature Fees fiscal stamps with the letters RJC.

Stationery Office records are no longer available to give the date when perforating first commenced but they were using the S CROWN O perforation on stamps of the 1912-22 issue. The earliest date so far reported is 20 Dec. 22 on a 6d. value. There exists a complete Stationery Office label dated 25 Oct. 1922 with a 1/- stamp that is not perforated. Could this indicate that perforating was started between these two dates? The other values known from this period are 3d., 9d., and 1/-.

With the 1924-26 issues the values from ½d. to 4d. are all used, as are the 6d., 9d. and 1/- stamps, but members have not reported the 5d., 10d. or any value over 1/-. In the photogravure issue of

1934-36 the same values are used with the addition of the 10d. Only the 1d. and 1½d. stamps of K.E.VIII have been noted with the perforation, but the stamps of K.G.VI include values up to 10/-, although the 5d., 7d., and 11d. do not seem to have been perforated.

The pins became much damaged on the stamps of the 1937-47 issue, with as many as nine pins being broken, and a new die became necessary. The change from S CROWN O to HM/SO took place in 1949. The change over commenced in February but stocks already perforated with the earlier die were used to exhaustion so that there was no specific date of change.

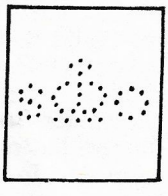
The perforating machine in use is treadle operated and was manufactured by J. Sloper & Company Limited. In reply to an enquiry in June 1964, the Stationery Office said, "Stamps are obtained from the GPO and are over-perforated in a Stationery Office Warehouse. Lower denomination stamps are in sheets of 240 and 3 sheets are overperforated at a time, but only line by line (i.e. $3 \times 12 = 36$ stamps a time)". It would seem that sheets of stamps are not folded before being perforated, for inverted perfins are rarely found. The only inverted perfin reported is the S CROWN O die on the ½d. green of 1941-42, and on the 2d. value there is an example of a double perforation, one normal and one reversed.

Broken pin varieties may be found on the HM/SO die—one with the hole missing at the centre of M being common.

The following notes on this variety have been obtained from the Stationery Office, "Used with normal size stamps, when face downwards, the fifth stamp from the right on each line shows this defect. With larger stamps (2/6 and over) the second stamp shows the defect but the position is not constant as the overall width of these sheets is less than those of the lower denominations and allows flexibility of feeding".

Postmarks have been reported from London, Cardiff and Manchester, but one would also expect them to be found from the other places mentioned in the first paragraph of the previous page.

The stamps were used for Inland Parcel Post up to 1942 when an "Official Paid" parcel post label was introduced. "Official Paid" letter post labels are also being used so that most of the stamps now used will be found on letters and parcels for abroad. In certain Regional Offices, where Official Paid stationery is used, stamps are still employed on internal mail for payment of registration and expressing fees.



1912-22 K.G.V.

3d.	violet	E
6d.	purple	E
9d.	green	F
1/-	bistre	D

1924-26 K.G.V.

½d.	green	C
1d.	scarlet	D
1½d.	chestnut	D
2d.	orange	D
2½d.	blue	C
3d.	violet	B
4d.	green	D
6d.	purple	C
9d.	green	C
1/-	bistre	C

1934-36 K.G.V.

½d.	green	C
1d.	scarlet	B
1½d.	red-brown	B
2d.	orange	C
2½d.	ultram.	C
3d.	violet	B
4d.	grey-green	A
9d.	olive-grn	C
10d.	blue	C
1/-	brown	B

1936 K.E.VIII

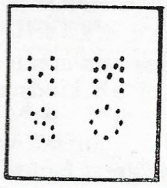
1d.	scarlet	B
1½d.	red-brown	C

1937-48 K.G.VI.

½d.	green	A
1d.	scarlet	(c)
1½d.	red-brown	B
2d.	orange	B
2½d.	ultram.	C
3d.	violet	B
4d.	grey-green	B
6d.	purple	B
8d.	carmine	B
9d.	green	A
10d.	blue	B
1/-	bistre	A
2/6	brown	C
2/6	yellow-grn	C
5/-	red	C
10/-	ultram.	E

1941-42 Light Colours

½d.	green	(b)
1d.	scarlet	A
1½d.	red-brown	B
2d.	orange	(c)
2½d.	ultram.	A
3d.	violet	(c)



1937-48 K.G.VI

1d.	scarlet	C
2d.	orange	C
2½d.	ultram.	C
4d.	grey-green	C
6d.	purple	B
9d.	green	C
1/-	brown	B
2/6	green	C
5/-	red	C

1941-42 Light Colours

½d.	green	A
1d.	scarlet	A
1½d.	red-brown	B
2d.	orange	A
2½d.	ultram.	(c)
3d.	violet	(c)

1950-51 colour change

½d.	orange	A
1d.	ultram.	A
1½d.	green	A
2d.	red-brown	A
2½d.	scarlet	A
4d.	ultram.	A
2/6	green	B
5/-	red	C
10/-	ultram.	C

1951

Festival 4d. C
(Reported in Stamp Collecting)
No commemorative stamps reported by members.

Q.E.II (Simplified)

½d.	orange	(c)	6d.	purple	(b)
1d.	ultram.	(c)	9d.	green	(c)
1½d.	green	(a)	1/-	brown	(b)
2d.	brown	(b)	2/6	black	(c)
2½d.	red	(a)	5/-	red	A
3d.	lilac	(a)	10/-	ultram.	B
4d.	ultram.	(c)			

1953 Coronation

2½d. carmine-red C

Have there been two HM/SO dies? Miss Thornton has an example of the perfin on a 2½d. blue K.G.VI stamp which has a postmark dated 31 MCH 1944—that is, one month after the HM/SO die came into use. In this particular example the holes are slightly larger than are seen in all her other examples. The lowest hole in the centre of the M is opposite the second holes of the outside strokes of the letter. The overall measurements of the complete die, taken from the centre of the holes, is a little wider. The perfin "looks different". Could this have been some kind of provisional die?

1.7 THE MINISTRY OF MUNITIONS NATIONAL FACTORIES

The Ministry of Munitions was created in 1915, and dealt with the supplies of munitions of all kinds needed during the period of World War I. It was renamed the Ministry of Supply in 1918.

A number of "National Factories" were in production during the war years; there were the great factories under the direct ownership of the Ministry, such as those at Gretna and Queensferry—His Majesty's Factories; there were others which acted as Agents to the Ministry during the emergency period.

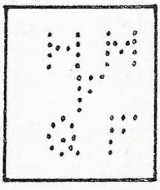
The Encyclopaedia Britannica gives the following information about the Gretna Green factory:—

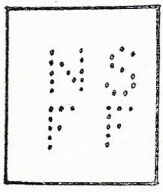
"During World War I, a temporary manufacturing township for the provision of cordite was created on a tract of land some 10 miles long and from 1 to 2 miles wide, with Gretna Green in its centre. The building fell largely into two groups, one at Dornach to the West and one 7 miles East at Mossband and Longtown. The whole undertaking cost over £9,000,000, and employed at one time 24,700 persons. It was sold in 1924".

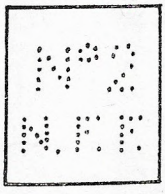
The National Factory perfins listed below have all been reported by Mr. Rymer Young, who has examples of them from a collection formed by the late Dr. Gordon Ward. No further information has been received from members.

These perfins must be fairly scarce, but it is not possible to suggest comparative ratings at present.

All the stamps listed are those of K.G.V 1912-22 issue.







HIS MAJESTY'S FACTORIES

½d. green
1d. red
2d. orange
2½d. blue

Postmarks:—Gretna/Carlisle,
Gretna/Dumfriesshire

HIS MAJESTY'S FACTORY QUEENSFERRY

½d. green
1d. red
1½d. brown

Postmarks:—Chester and Queensferry/Chester.

NATIONAL SHELL FILLING FACTORY

½d. green
1d. red
1½d. brown

Postmark:—Beeston/Nottingham.

No. 2 NATIONAL FILLING FACTORY

½d. green
1d. red

Postmarks:—Fazakerly/Liverpool,
Rice Lane/Liverpool.

1.8 PUBLIC TRUSTEE OFFICE

This is a Government Office by means of which the State acts as executor and trustee under a will, or as trustee under a settlement, etc.

It is to Mr. W. J. Pieterse of Peterborough, Canada, that the honour goes of discovering this new perforated Official stamp; in a letter dated November, 1963, Mr. Pieterse says that he has one cover in his collection used by the Public Trustee, London. It has "On His Majesty's Service" printed at the top of the envelope and the four 1d. red stamps are perforated:—

PT/O 2H 10,9/10

The postmark is London E.C. and the date is 14 April 1914. The letter was sent to a banking company in Holland.

The Public Office was opened in 1908, and therefore it is possible that PT/O perfins may exist from that date.

No member has so far reported any further examples.

APPENDIX 1

ADDITIONS TO THE GREAT BRITAIN SECTION

CROWN AGENTS

1912-22	K.G.V	1d red	(M. E. Thornton)
1937-39	K.G.VI	1d scarlet	(C. H. Regnier)

DEPARTMENT OF SCIENTIFIC & INDUSTRIAL RESEARCH

1951	K.G.VI	2/6d yell-green	(D. Clayton)

Additional Information

It has been pointed out that, theoretically, postmarks could also be found from any part of the country, as between 1939 and 1950 one branch of the Department sent out many thousands of letters to all parts of England and Wales which were accompanied by labels franked with the DS/IR perforated stamps for reply, and it is therefore possible that some of these stamps could have survived.

The Department was dissolved in June 1965.

STATIONERY OFFICE

S Crown O

1912-22	K.G.V	2½d blue	(D. Clayton)
1924-26	K.G.V	10d turq.-blue	(M. J. Burrows)
1946	K.G.VI "Victory"	3d violet	(M. E. Thornton)

NOTE: This latter stamp is the first commemorative to be reported.

THE GREAT BRITAIN PHILATELIC SOCIETY

Founded 1955

The premier society for all G. B. specialists aimed to promote, encourage and contribute to the advancement of the Philately of Great Britain

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